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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the origin and philosophy of the whole language movement, focusing on the learning theory, language attitudes, language acquisition, and reading processes employed by the approach. The roles of teachers, learners, parents, and student evaluation in the whole language approach are then examined. The paper then addresses how these philosophical and theoretical principles are practiced in the classroom through descriptions of whole language practice at Sunnyslope Elementary School in Phoenix, Arizona. The paper concludes that the whole language approach can be a highly effective technique for first- and second-language instruction. Its ultimate goal is to foster the self-recognition, self-growth, and self-development of individuals to the fullest extent. A 30-item annotated bibliography is included. (MDM)

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WHOLE LANGUAGE

-- Philosophical Belief, Theory and Practice

by

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WHOLE LANGUAGE -- Philosophical Belief, Theory, and Practice

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ABSTRACT

For the last three decades, in the fields of English education and language acquisition, many scholars, practitioners, and teachers have been discussing whole language and its practices and outcomes. This paper intends to explore what whole language is and how it can be applied to the English class.

The paper first discusses the origin and philosophy of whole language, learning theory, the views of language and language acquisition and reading processes. Then, the roles of teachers, learners, parents and special evaluation are discussed one by one. Finally, discussions are turned to how these philosophical and theoretical principles are practiced in the classroom. The focuses are on the holistic and integrated instruction of reading and writing, literature study, literacy environment and second language lerarning application.

In order to investigate the effect of a whole language program in practice and in reality, the author conducted fieldwork to do participant observation in the Sunnyslope Elementary School, a whole language school in Phoenix, Arizona, to observe in various subjects' classes of various grades and observe what is going on in the classes of different subjects such as writing, science, social study, . . . etc. The observation records are used as examples to add to the paper to prove the theory.

The beliefs of whole language such as humanism, whole person, learning theory, language acquisition theory, reading processes, and integrated instruction of reading and writing, . . . etc. are considered to be universal principles and can be applied in a great scale in education, language teaching, and second and foreign language learning, not only in kindergarten and elementary levels, but also in secondary and higher and adult education levels.

WHOLE LANGUAGE

Part I: An Overview

In the 1970s, more and more educators were aware of the quality of American public education. Books such as A Nation at Risk (1983), Involvement in Learning (1984), were published to discuss the problems and criticize the quality of undergraduate as well as elementary and secondary education, advocating the urgent need to reform the curriculum, and improve the quality.

In a typical public classroom, it was noticed that the real "basic" -- time engaged in actual reading and writing in school (Reutzel, Hollingsworth, 1988) was neglected. For many years, educators from kindergarten to the twelfth grade have been devoted to the teaching of vocabulary, spelling, grammar, punctuation, and so forth as isolated skills, unconnected with everyday use of reading, speaking, and writing. "Worksheets and tests have proliferated at such an alarming rate that both teachers and students scramble to 'get through the materials' by the end of the school year" (Reutzel, Hollingsworth, 1988). The result is that more and more time is applied to worksheets and tests, and less and less time is used in reading and writing.

The practices are now viewed with less favor as researchers and educators investigate reading and writing as processes to be dealt with as a "whole" (Goodman, 1986). Therefore, out of concern about the limited time spent on reading and writing each school day, an increasing number of educators joined the forces of whole language theory.

The differences between whole language practices and current typical practices in school with respect to reading and writing instruction are complex.

In contrast to the prevailing views of education, the learning process, and the roles of children and teachers in the process, whole language practices attempt to get back to basics by inviting students to learn to read and write by reading and writing "real stuff. "

Ken Goodman (1986) in his What's Whole in Whole Language? states, "Whole language is clearly a lot of things to a lot of people; it's not a dogma to be narrowly practiced. It's a way of bringing together a view of language, a view of learning, and a view of people, in particular to special groups of people: kids and teachers" (p. 5).

Whole language theory includes not only pedagogical issues, but also philosophical beliefs, principles of learning, classroom environment, and teacher and child behaviors. Judith Newman (1985) indicates that whole language is not just an instructional approach but rather a philosophical stance. Altwerger, Edelsky, Flores (1987) in their "Whole language: what's new?" emphasize that whole language is "a set of beliefs, a prospective, not practice. It must become practice, but not practice itself."

In addition to discussing the practices in the classroom, it is discovered that most researchers and proponents emphasize the philosophical base of whole language. It is summarized here that the philosophical belief is very crucial to whole language. It is the origin and innovating background of whole language theory.

Part II : Theory and Beliefs

Origin and Philosophy

Whole language proponents place children and their needs at the heart of schooling. They advocate that the individual child is a "whole child" (Goodman, 1986). Goodman (1986) summarizes what's whole in whole language as follows:

-- Whole language learning builds around whole learners learning whole language in whole situations.

-- Whole language learning assumes respect for language, for the learner, and for the teacher.

-- The focus is on meaning and not on language itself, in authentic speech and literacy events.

-- Learners are encouraged to take risks and invited to use language, in all its varieties, for their own purposes.

-- In a whole language classroom, all the varied functions of oral and written language are appropriate and encouraged. (p. 40)

The schooling process and environment are designed to meet the needs of each child. Each child is different and unique in learning process and personality, and is encouraged to actively participate to proceed and develop his/her own learning step. Students are not passive recipients. In contrast, they should be respected and trusted to be competent learners who have many prior experiences and know how to learn before they are taught.

According to Shafer (1989), whole language is regarded to be "a new refinement of progressive education" (p. 3). He points out: "Whole language is a new manifestation of progressive education and must surely be considered

a refinement of it -- a refinement in the sense that it has come about largely as a result of the explosion of knowledge concerning the ways children acquire language competence" (p. 3), because progressive education basically advocated a "child-centered," "purposeful learning" education with a philosophy of active self-directed learning. Based on the same beliefs, the origin of whole language even can be traced back to the tradition of Rousseau, Pestalozzi, and Froebel in educational philosophy and learning theory (Shafer, 1989).

In fact, whole language shares a similar belief of "a personal growth model of reading and writing" (Shafer, 1989, p. 7) with open education, which has been a British version of progressive education since the 1930s. In their recent article, Altwerger, Edelsky, and Flores (1987) state that Dewey, more whole language-like than his followers, thought literacy should only be taught in connection with its use as a tool for something else. They explain:

> Both Open Education and Whole Language note the active character of learning; both center on `the whole child.' Both see learning as rooted in first-hand experience and genuine problem solving. Both concern themselves with more than language and literacy, more than thought or learning in the abstract but with thought-in-interaction, with learning-in-life. . . . . (p. 452)

In America, the personal growth model of progressive movement was demonstrated in the continuous "revolutionary innovations" (Shafer, 1989), i.e. , "language experience approach" and "individualized reading." Language experience approach was practiced since the 1920s and 1930s by many teachers who were interested in using children's own language and experience as material for reading and writing. It was formalized as the language experience approach in the 1940s. "Individualized reading," developed in the 1930s and

1940s, was concerned wide individual differences in learning and tried to promote child development in many different aspects -- physical, mental, social, emotional, linguistic, and experiential.

Enriched by the recent research of psycholinguistics, whole language came into being as a refined form of the progressive tradition, which shows the belief that "education is meant to develop the potential of each individual" (Shafer, 1989). Moreover, whole language benefited much from the research of language acquisition, which makes it differ greatly from the previous innovations -- language experience approach, individualized reading, and the British counterpart: open education.

Learning Theory

In whole language curriculum, learning is viewed to be effective when involved in the real world. It is purposeful learning in a problem-solving process. All learning progresses continually or along with stages of growth and development. Each child has his/her own personal manner and stage in physical, mental, social and emotional development. Each child is treated unique and as a whole. It is learner-centered. Anderson states (1984) that "Each individual child assimilates and accommodates incoming stimuli and experiences in his or her own way to construct meaning and understanding of the world" (p. 1). Children learn in a holistic way, "from general to specific, familiar to unfamiliar" (Ferguson, 1988). How students learn is coupled with what they want to know. It is purpose that makes the learning occur. That means that learners' purposes and intentions are what drives learning. It is self-directed purposeful learning.

Learning is also a social process, which occurs in social contexts and is mediated by others. Based on Vygosky's (1978) ideas about the social nature of learning, whole language stresses the importance of collaborations, between students and teachers and between peers, through which students can transcend their own individual limitations (Edelsky, Altwerger, and Flores, 1991).

Based on Piagetian and Progressive Education perspective (Piaget, 1967; Dewey, 1963), whole language educators contend that learning is best achieved through direct engagement and experience. They believe that everything is learned by doing and reflecting and that learners are active participants in their own learning. Learning also involves hypothesis testing. Hypothesis forming and testing underlies all learning (Edelsky, Altwerger, and Flores, 1991).

To summarize, whole language views language learning as profoundly social, occurring between and with people in the contexts of social life, and including not just the acquisition of language but the transmission of culture. It also sees language learning as linguistic, hypothesizing are about language subsystems. Through generating and testing hypotheses, students learn about the linguistic knowledge. In a word, a whole language view of learning attends to the social and the hypothesizing character of learning as well as the importance of direct experience (Edelsky, Altwerger, and Flores, 1991).

Language

In a whole language perspective, it is not just spoken language that counts as language. Spoken language, written language, sign language - each is a system of linguistic representatives for creating meanings as well as comprehending the world. Each mode (oral, written, sign) has its own set of

constraints and properties. They all share certain characteristics: i.e., they are profoundly social, they contain interdependent and inseparable subsystems, and they are predictable. Whether oral, written, or sign language is a complex system for creating meaning through socially shared conventions (Halliday, 1978).

Language is a communication tool. It is used to convey and construct meaning for social purposes. Language is "shared" (Goodman, 1986) among groups, it is a social medium for sharing thought, culture. It is used as "whole," (Goodman, 1986) and "indivisible" (Altgerwer, et al. 1987). Anderson (1984) describes that anyone using language (a baby, an adult, a second language learner) is using all systems in making meaning to accomplish purposes.

Language is a means for learning, too. Students create their world as well as find reality through language (Goodman, Smith, Meredith & Yetta Goodman, 1987). Frank Smith (1988) states that the ability to predict is the basis of our comprehension of the world, including "our understanding of spoken and written language" (p. 1). We comprehend and learn about the world by understanding spoken and written language. In a word, "language is considered a tool for making sense of something else; the 'something elses' (science, social studies topics) have prominence" (Altwerger, et al. 1987).

In brief, language is a medium leading to comprehension and learning, it is an instrument, not the ultimate goal. However, this instrument is very critical to becoming literate. Through using and understanding language, students learn, grow, and form their own life perspective, culture, and knowledge background.

Language Acquisition

Psycholinguistic research indicates that language is learned from the environment naturally and orally from the very beginning stage of a baby. Most children are considered to have already approximated the adult language model at school entrance. They should be respected as competent learners who have learned much prior to formal teaching. It is a "nature-nurture view" (Goodman, Smith, Meredith, & Yetta Goodman, 1987). They acquire language, both oral and written, through "real use," (Altwerger, et al. 1987) not through practicing exercises.

The language processes, speaking, listening, reading, and writing were identified as interrelated and interdependent processes. Each productive and receptive language process is reinforced and strengthened by other processes (Anderson, 1988). It is easy to learn language from the real world because it is meaningful. Goodman (1986) states that "relevance," "purpose," "meaning," "respect," and "power" make language learning easy (p. 9).

Thus, language should be meaningful and relevant to the learners. Students use language for their own purposes, to express, to communicate, to interact among the classroom community. Moreover, when they are respected and empowered to use their own specific language, they can best interact and share with others. As Goodman says, "Whole language is whole: it does not exclude some languages, some dialects, or some registers because speakers lack status in a particular society" (p. 27). Language learning is a process of social and personal invention. It is a "social-personal view" (Goodman, Smith, Meredith, & Yetta Goodman 1987). Learners are expected to become skilled language users (Altgerwer, et al. 1987). They own their own language and

teachers respect their specific ownership. At the same time, language is learned through language.

Reading and writing develop as students experience language in its various expressions -- speaking, listening, reading, and writing. From a socio-psycholinguistic perspective, written (reading and writing) and oral (speaking and listening) languages not only develop in agreement with each other but also in analogous ways (see Table 1). That is, the principles of the development of oral language also apply to written language (Rhodes, Dudley-Marling, 1988).

Table 1

Comparable Oral and Written Stages in Language Development

Oral language stages	Written language stages	Level of understanding
Babbling and cooing	Scribbling	Exploration of medium
Language intonation	Linear/repetitive drawing	Refining the form
Native language sounds	Letterlike forms	Cultural relevance
Words	Letters and early word-symbol relationships	Conventions of language
Creative grammar	Invented spelling	Overgeneralization of "rule" hypotheses
Adult speech	Standard spelling	Formal structure

Note. From "Talking and Writing: Explain the Whole Language Approach to Parents." by Marjorie V. Fields, May, 1988, The Reading Teacher, p. 899.

Rhodes and Dudley-Marling (1988) summarize the language-learning principles as follows:

1. Children learn language by using language.
2. The focus in language learning is on meaning and social function rather than form.
3. Language learning is personally important, concretely based, and free from anxiety.
4. Children learn to use language in an ever-widening variety of contexts and to vary their language according to the context in which it occurs.
5. Knowledge of language rules is largely intuitive. Children abstract rules from the language data around them and employ these rules when using language.
6. Language learning is largely self-directed.
7. Though rate of development is different, the conditions necessary for language learning are similar for all. (p. 13-25)

These language-learning principles are guides to build a whole language curriculum. As Goodman, Smith, Meredith, and Yetta Goodman (1987) indicate in their Language and Thinking in School: "The whole-language curriculum recognizes an essential of language learning: people learn to talk by talking, comprehend oral language by listening, write by writing, and read by reading. And they learn to think by thinking. The school program is built around stimulating the expansion of language and thinking in the context of their functional use" (p. 7).

In summary, reading and writing development are guided by the same language-learning principles that govern oral language development.

Children learn language, oral or written, to achieve personal, communicative purposes. Children learn best when they are actively involved in their language learning, when they are immersed in language, and when they are exposed to frequent demonstrations of the uses of written language in a variety of contexts. Children must also have frequent chances to use written language to fulfill personal intentions in a variety of settings. These principles guide the instruction of reading and writing in the whole language programs.

Reading Process

In his "Reading Process and Practice," Weaver (1988) holds that the most successful reading instruction is likely to be that which is based on a solid understanding of the reading process itself and to be an approach which promotes rather than thwarts the acquisition of good reading strategies. Therefore, the understanding of reading process is very crucial to reading instruction. In the whole language program, reading is viewed as constructing meaning (Altwerger, et al. 1987). It is an active, interactive, not a passive process.

Goodman (1973) states that reading is regarded as an interaction between the reader and written language, through which the reader attempts to reconstruct a message from the writer. It means bringing meaning to a text in order to get meaning. Weaver (1988) says: "Reading is not a passive process by which we soak up words and information from the page, but an active process by which we predict, sample, and confirm or correct our hypothesis about the written text" (p. xvii).

Frank Smith (1988) explains more deeply: "Learning can be considered as the modification of what we already know as a consequence of our

interactions with the world around us. We learn to read, and we learn through reading, by adding to what we know already" (p. 6). It means that reading is a key to learning and it is always an active interaction between the readers and the text.

In a word, our "theory of the world" is modified all the time when reading. Learning to read and learning through reading are very crucial principles in the whole language instruction.

Teachers' Role

The teacher's role in a whole language program is very important. Goodman (1986) points out that without whole language teachers, there is no whole language program. The teacher plays an enlightening role, serving as guide and facilitator. A strong commitment is necessary because being a professional means accepting responsibility to educate every learner to the greatest extent. Teachers should create curriculum by themselves, trying to bring the theory and practices together in the classroom. Edelsky, Altwerger, and Flores (1987) indicate that "Whole language teachers try to be conscious of and reflect on their own underlying beliefs; they deliberately tie practice and theory" (p. 149).

As Reutzel and Hollingsworth (1988) describe, teachers in the whole language classroom are often hard to spot. They do not direct the center of attention, but actively participate with their students in organizing reading and writing activities. Teachers often include children in planning instruction to foster a feeling among students of ownership of the curriculum and their own learning. They do not predetermine every detail of the curriculum and daily lessons. They often act like coaches, demonstrating, explaining, and

cheering so children can more effectively develop their own writings, dramas, or science projects (Altwerger, etc. 1987). They also have to be aware of every child's growth and learning. In the beginning, they are obliged to explain to parents about the whole language theory and convince them; later, in the process, they should contact the parents often to discuss with them about children's problems and growth.

It is critical that teachers listen to what children and their parents say. They must listen to what parents indicate about their situations, and try to be reasonable in their expectations and suggestions (Froese, ed., 1991). However, they always have faith in the infinite possibilities of all students, rather than holding a limiting view of their potential (Freeman & Freeman, 1992).

Learners' Role

In a whole language program, learners are respected as unique individuals (Goodman, 1986). Students are the focus in whole language classroom (Reutzel & Hollingsworth, 1988). They direct themselves to learn and choose their favorite topics to write about. They are active participants and self-directed learners, highly motivated in learning, in planning their own activities, such as science or social study projects. They exchange their ideas with the teacher and group partners freely, and would like to share their works with peers by performing or publishing their writings for their classmates.

The students are responsible learners, doing their work automatically and always knowing what to do. Once the teacher announces to begin a session, they would go to their work immediately. They feel free to ask questions, to talk about what they know, what they have experienced. It is all right to make mistakes, too, because they are taught that making mistakes is a

natural process of learning. They respect themselves and one another. The relationship between the classroom peers is cooperative, supportive, advisory, rather than competitive.

In a word, students learn to recognize the purpose and joy of learning for learning's sake. They are supposed to enjoy learning intrinsically. Eventually, they are expected to become life long learners, communicators, sharers, and self-educators.

Parents' Participation

In a whole language program, parents' understanding the natural approach to literacy is very important because maximum benefit can be obtained only if teachers ensure parents that reading and writing develop together and are interdependent (Fields, 1988). Parents should also realize that their children's literacy will develop at their own appropriate rate. Comparing stages of writing with talking, for instance, babbling is compared with scribbling, and language intonation with repetitive drawing, teachers can help parents understand the process of their child's acquiring literacy.

Therefore, teachers have to hold meetings with parents to explain the views of language, of learning, of teaching, and of curriculum. Teachers suggest ways of how parents can help and observe their children's progress. Parents are invited to visit the classroom often. When they come, teachers help them understand what is going on in the classroom and why (Goodman, 1986).

In a word, parents are expected to become "kid-watchers" and continue observing the learning of their children outside of the classroom (Yetta Goodman, 1985).

Evaluation

Evaluation is an integral part of curriculum (Yetta Goodman, 1989). Evaluation in a whole language program can not be separated from classroom organization, from the relationship between teachers and students, from continuous learning experiences and activities. But it is not proceeded in the forms of taking tests and setting criteria. For example, spelling is not a matter of memorizing words correctly for a spelling test, but a matter of first trying out spelling in writing. Studying science is not for gaining grades on tests, but for broadening knowledge toward creative projects or experiments.

Goodman (1986) says, "Informally, in the course of watching a child write, listening to a group of children discuss or plan together, or having a casual conversation, teachers evaluate. . . .The key is that it happens in the course of ongoing classroom activities" (p. 41). The evaluation is going on every day; it is built into the activities all the time. It is integrated with the activities, not a separate, discrete test.

"Evaluation is part of the double agenda in the whole language classroom" (Yetta Goodman, 1989, p. 7). She explains that one side of the agenda--*Students Are Learning,,* shows where the students and teacher are busily and actively engaged: in reading to solve problems, to add to their scientific knowledge and their aesthetic pleasure; in writing to express what they know, to convey their meaning, to create artistically; and in using oral and written language to comprehend and learn about the world; the other side of the agenda: *Teacher's Evaluation* demonstrates that while the classroom community is involved in learning, the teacher is monitoring the objectives of language learning and conceptual development.

Table 2

The Double Agenda: Theory and General Principles of Evaluation.

TEACHER'S EVALUATION	STUDENTS ARE LEARNING
teachers involved	students and teachers are involved
evaluation	learning about their world
of	answering their questions
language development	solving their problems
cognitive development	evaluating their own learning
curriculum	through
	language use
a	
continuous	reading
ongoing	writing
integral	speaking
process	listening

Note: From The Whole Language Evaluation Book by Kenneth S. Goodman, Yetta M. Goodman, & Wendy J. Hood, 1989. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Evaluation in a whole language program actually happens in three ways: observing, interacting, and analyzing. The ultimate goal of the evaluation is self-evaluation for both the teacher and the students. Through self-evaluation, the teacher involves the students in serious examination of questions such as: How am I doing? What can I do to see that things go better next time? Students keep records of their own learning experiences and meet

with the teacher to discuss what they have achieved and what they want to accomplish. In this way, the teacher assists the students in understanding themselves and their capabilities; hence, evaluation helps them develop and grow.

The figure below is used as a conclusion of this section. It shows the relationships of observation, interaction, and analysis of a class evaluation. Each may be formal, for instance, records kept of an activity following a particular procedure at regular intervals; or each may be done informally and occur at any time the teacher and the student or students come in contact. Observation, interaction, and analysis may take place incidentally whenever the teacher perceives that the students are engaged in an activity that will reveal important understandings about a student's learning or development. Or it may be part of a planned activity with a variety of forms and materials at hand to assist in the collection and analysis of the information (Goodmans & Hood, 1989, p. 9).

Figure 1 Evaluation in Whole Language Classrooms

From The Whole Language Evaluation Book by Kenneth S. Goodman, Yetta Goodman, Wendy J. Hood, 1989. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

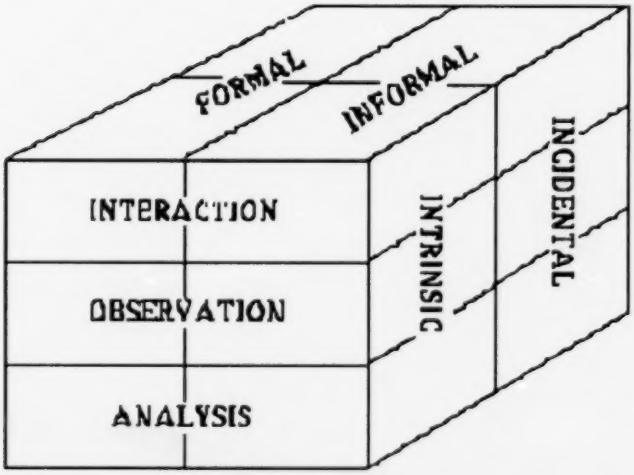

Figure 1. Evalution in whole Language Classrooms

Part III: Practices in Whole Language Classrooms

Holistic Instruction: Integrating Reading and Writing

As stated above, reading is the key to learning. It enables the reader to broaden and modify "his theory of the world" (Smith, 1988). Frank Smith (1988) indicates the benefits of reading as follows:

> The power that reading provides is enormous, not only in giving access to people far distant and possibly long dead, but also in allowing entry into worlds which might otherwise not be experienced, which might otherwise not exist. Reading enables us to manipulate time itself, to involve ourselves in ideas or events at a rate and in a sequence of our own choosing, quite independently of the manner in which the text was produced or printed. We do not have such power when we listen to speech or watch a movie. (p. 1)

Based on the understanding of the importance of reading and language processes (all language skills are interdependent, inseparable), the whole language theory integrates reading and writing as "whole activities" (Altwerger, etc. 1987). The goal is to engage learners in authentic and real reading and writing. Children read "real" literature and they write their own real experiences. The teacher relies largely on literature, not textbooks, for proper purposes.

Goodmans, Smith, and Meredith (1987) contend that:

> The curriculum is integrated, holistic, and naturalistic. It integrates traditional disciplines and subject areas around life situations and problem solving. . . . it treats learning in school as the same as it is outside of a school: human beings are constantly trying to make

> sense of their world. . . .Children at very young ages will comment about language or begin asking what particular words mean. School can help to sort out what they have learned intuitively about language. (p. 10)

Take the Sunnyslope Elementary School (S. E. S., in Phoenix, Arizona, U. S. A., the author of this paper has visited the school and participated in their classes (of about twenty students) of various subjects in different grades, from kindergarten to sixth grade, for one whole day) as an example, the fourth grade students' discussed their reading progress of small-group literature study and signed contracts with the teacher in the beginning of the semester. A first grade teacher used a song to teach pronunciation and rhyme. In a second grade classroom, it was observed that some students were picking up their writing folders to continue drawing and writing experiences of their own previous Halloween night, some were tutored by the teacher to correct their spellings and sentences, and others were practicing the spelling of a list of vocabulary words hung on the wall. The school helped sort out what students have learned. On the wall of a Sunnyslope classroom, teachers sorted words into place words: *park, town, city...etc.,* and action words: *open, close, read ... etc..* In the fifth grade classroom, there was a small group eagerly asking the attention of peers to share the performance of their writing. Some girls were writing their chosen topics.

The reading and writing activities of the whole language program in the S. E. S. began with stories, poems, signs, and prints from the child's environment, e.g. candy wrappers, cereal boxes, road signs, etc. The real reading and writing kept going on in the whole language classroom, children

were silently reading their chosen literature in small groups, or discussing the characters, plots, or themes with the teacher in a small group.

Students are encouraged to read and read. Everything, including literature, magazines, newspaper, fairy tales, fictions, advertisements, etc. is widely used within and outside the classroom to add breadth and depth to their prior knowledge and facilitate the growth of comprehension (Smith, 1988).

In their early attempts at reading and writing, children are invited to express and communicate without worrying about proper spelling and punctuation. Spelling is a communicative act and develops in contexts. It is viewed as a means of sharing meaning with an interested listener/reader. The principle to spelling instruction is discovery-based. The teacher evaluates what the child produces and provides some feedback to facilitate a qualitative change. Correct spelling is regarded as the end product or the accomplishment of learning. Surely, the long term goal is to spell phonetically regular words correctly, but the daily objectives would be to focus on small steps in the process of discovering properties of phonetic representation (Norris, 1989).

In summary, holistic instruction, as Goodman (1988) says, shows continuous respect for language, for learners, and for teachers. It begins with everyday, useful, relevant, functional language, and moves through a full range of written language including literature in all its variety.

Literature Study

One of the most specific features in a whole language program is the use of authentic children's literature as reading materials. Literature study is

built on the model of the bedtime story, in which an adult shares a book with a child by reading it aloud and pointing to the words, because researchers found that children who ask for the same book and correct their parents on some words when reading can eventually match the words they say with the words they see in the book and learn to read without formal instruction (Cullinan, 1986).

Hence, the rich, satisfying language and the engaging plots of the "real" literature become the instructional materials leading toward literacy (Peterson, his lecture). Poetry, songs, chants, or plays can be used to read to students, too. *Big books* are also very useful.

Moreover, as Frank Smith (1988) advocates, promoting in students a sense of belonging to a "literacy club" (p. 214) is important because the feeling of membership is an essential ingredient to owning the reading process and writing activity.

In the Sunnyslope Elementary School, the fourth grade students could be seen lying on the floor doing silent reading. They formed small cooperative teams, three or four in a group, silently reading their selected literature together. They signed contracts with the teacher about the reading progress in the beginning of the semester. One group was discussing with the teacher about the characters, plots, and themes. The students expressed eagerly what they knew and judged what was right and what was wrong. The interaction between the teacher and the students proceeded very smoothly and harmoniously.

To be brief, books that children love will form the basis for a whole language curriculum (Mohr, 1988). Whole language classrooms are rich in print, resources and opportunities. Students learn not only reading and writing but also moral judgment through literature study. Teachers don't

teach moral standards directly, they just let students realize them through reading stories.

Classroom Activities and Interaction, and Some More Observation in the Sunnyslope Elementary School

Several central parts of a whole language program are writing workshop, silent reading, brainstorming, sharing and performing, peer groups, topic discussion, thematic building. Students keep their writing folders and write their real experiences every day. They write and publish their writings to share with peers. They respond to one another, too. Freeman (1985) points out that response and revision play important roles in the learning process. The response includes feedback or reaction to something a writer has produced. Therefore, students may write Thank-you notes to each other to tell the writer how they were touched by his/her writing, or felt about his/her project. Teachers may give notes to students, too, to respond to his performance or sharing. The interaction in a whole language classroom is between the teacher and students as well as between peers.

Revision happens every day, too, which concerns an understanding of a last type of revision, a cognitive reorganization that must take place for transferable learning to occur and a reorganization that stems from response. "Response leads to cognitive reorganization" (Freeman, 1986, p. xii). Thus, peer groups, or writing workshops are main parts of whole language classroom activities which help students examine, revise, and improve their own writings. Reading and writing skills are applied to every subject, too.

Students can use their writing skill to write a plan for a scientific project or record the progress of an experiment and write up the experimental reports.

In Sunnyslope, for instance, fifth graders wrote down some points to make a comparison between fish and lizards after they visited the Phoenix Zoo. In a third grade classroom, the class was proceeding with a topic discussion. Students were discussing the current relevant season, fall. They were brainstorming, eagerly expressing their own ideas related to "fall," such as leaves, dead trees, yellow and red colors, Thanksgiving Holiday, turkeys, . . . etc. All students were excited and raised their hands to request to speak out what they knew.

Since the San Francisco Earthquake in October of that year was a big shock to everybody, in a second grade classroom, the topic of earthquakes was studied and demonstrated on the wall by the teacher. They were talking about how earthquakes happen, what damage it would cause, and what people can do in an earthquake. It was a scientific study related to a current event.

As for social studies, the grass before the classrooms was used as a cemetery. Students put some vertical boards standing on the grass. On the board there were words like "Here lies Columbus. He discovered America in 1492," or, "Here lies Abraham Lincoln. He liberated black people," . . . etc. These kinds of activities are very creative and students can learn history through planning and implementing a project. The learning would be more effective because of personal participation and involvement. Students do not have to memorize the facts in textbooks. Rather, they have fun in proceeding with a social study project, and they do learn history as well as doing things. As for geographic study, globes, and maps were in every classroom, too.

Besides, the scientific studies were also found in the kindergarten and the sixth grade classrooms. In the kindergarten class, there were bottles filled with soil, in which some seeds were growing. Each kindergartner had his/her own bottle to take care of and observe, and his/her name was labeled on the bottle. The sixth graders were following the teacher's example and drawing their own weather charts. The students had to record the temperatures of the week or the month from watching TV weather reports and draw a temperature chart. The activities were related to their daily life.

In conclusion, the classroom interaction was always proceeding smoothly. Students always actively participated in interacting with the teacher, and peers. It is a multi-direction interaction in the classroom community. Teachers are instructing, tutoring, and evaluating. Learners are thinking, planning, doing, reading, writing, responding, exploring, and performing.

Literacy Environment

A whole language classroom is home-like and print-rich. In this classroom, the teacher tries to provide a natural environment for children to learn, grow, and develop their potential. The classroom is abundant in books, resources, references, and opportunities for students to explore their problems and to get to know themselves. It is a learning community; all children are included as resources to one another, too.

Loughlin and Martin (1987) indicates that an environment provisioned for literacy offers a broad spectrum of materials to support children's involvement in learning and provides a focus for literacy. The characteristics of the literacy environment are: interesting things to read and

write about, recording tools and materials, varied places to settle down for reading and writing, books everywhere, references where needed, display spaces and tools, and time and opportunities.

The literacy environment provides a specialized set of materials visible and available to children. The basic provisions in a whole language classroom are raw materials, containers, tools, work spaces, information sources, and display facilities (Loughlin, Martin, 1987). In the Sunnyslope Elementary School, it was observed that computers, pet cages, globes, maps, books, and display shelves are included in classrooms.

To put it briefly, a whole language classroom is greater than the sum of its parts. It is a community more than one child plus one child plus one child. Hence, in organizing a classroom, one should keep in mind how students learn, the problems they need and want to solve, and the literacy learning that helps them solve their problems, and then manage the classroom into a collaborative arena.

The Application in Second Language Learning

As discussed above, the whole language learning is based on students' interest. It is learner-centered. Since the learning is purposeful and meaningful, it can help students make sense of the outside world. Learning is a problem-solving and growing process, which is a whole context learning. Through the whole context learning of reading and writing, students can apply what they have learned to the real world. By the process, students develop to be whole persons.

In the second language learning, effective learning should involve reading and writing from the start. Second language teachers ought to offer as

great context as possible. The greater the contextual support is, the more efficient the learning would be. There is a recognition that all learning, including language learning, involves a gradual process of differentiating the parts out of the whole. Therefore, instead of teaching the discrete bits of language, teachers attempt to surround students with a wide range of the target language by providing whole texts to students on topics which are important and meaningful to students. It is a "whole-to-part" (Freeman & Freeman, 1992, p.34) language teaching. The teachers use specific techniques such as "show and tell" and "acting out situations" (Freeman & Freeman, 1992, p. 24) to make the new language understandable. The greater the contextual support provided by objects and actions, the lower the necessity for students to rely only on their new language itself. Students actually read and write whole contexts. Students read whole texts on topics that are meaningful and purposeful to them and write about their reading. In a word, a content reading class involves students in authentic, meaningful reading and writing and prepare students to be mainstreamed into regular content classes.

Teachers of second language students may also use the students' first language to provide contextual support for the second language teaching. Teachers often use a method called "preview, view, and review" (Freeman & Freeman, 1992, p. 25) to conduct teaching activities. In the first place, they use the students' first language to preview the lesson, which helps students understand the content. Then, the actual lesson presented in the target language. Finally, the main concepts would be reviewed in the first language again.

A whole language class for second language learners should be learner-centered. Teachers follow "a transactional approach" (Freeman & Freeman,

1992, p. 47), which stresses the activity of both the teacher and the learners. The teacher does not completely guide learning for the students. Instead, the teacher and the students work together to negotiate curriculum. Topics for learning and exploration may come from either the students or the teacher. Since language that is rich in context and relevant, interesting, and meaningful is easily to be learned naturally, regular writing publishing is a classroom routine and students often publish simple handmade books or newsletters, which have real purpose and meaning for them. A thematic approach also allows students to contextualize language and they can learn language as well as content.

One of the whole language principles is that learning takes place in social interaction. Usually, when students learn a new language, they expect to be able to communicate in the language. Therefore, whole language teachers often organize pen pals' correspondence, study groups, and cross-age tutoring to promote social interaction for second language learners. In the classroom, a communicative or community approach is used. Learners always work cooperatively to solve real problems.

Moreover, lessons for second language learners should include all four skills in the very beginning instruction. It is believed that oral and written can develop together. For example, instead of the teaching of vocabulary and facts about animals, students start with a picture and come up with all the descriptive words the different students know. Students learn both language and content. According to Gardner (1984), students not only are involved in the four skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing as they learn, but all the senses are considered important.

Meanwhile, learning should take place in the first language. Bilingual education is strongly supported by recent research. Research show that

students have a well-developed first language, they can learn a second language more rapidly; students who speak, read, and write their first language well are more apt to succeed academically in English. Therefore, for second language learners, building concepts in the first language supports second language learning. In other words, concepts developed in the first language are accessible through the second language. What second language learners learn in the first language can be easily transferred into the new language.

Another strong belief is that faith in the learner expands student potential. It is important to value and respect the second language learners' first language and draw on their culture, which help students view themselves positively. Teachers who believe in their students plan activities that show their faith in the learner, which can facilitate students' progress and expand students' potential.

In summary, all students can learn a second language well if they are engaged in meaningful activities which move from whole to part, build on students' interests and backgrounds, serve their needs, provide opportunities for social interaction, and develop their skills in both oral and written language. It is a whole person second language teaching and learning.

CONCLUSION

As discussed above, whole language implies whole person, whole learning, whole teaching, whole activity, whole language, and whole environment. The beliefs backing whole language such as humanism, learning theory, language acquisition, and reading process are regarded to be universally true. The reading process, for instance, is considered to have

cognitive universals for all humans (Foorman, Siegel, ed. 1986). For second language learning, the interactive process of reading is viewed to be true, too (Carell, Devine, Eskey, et. al. 1988).

From many recent publishings, it is noted that whole language is practiced widely at many different levels. Hollingsworth and Reutzel (1988) report that practices consistent with whole language theory help learning disabled students become literate. Rhodes and Dudley-Marling (1988) consider that a holistic perspective on reading and writing instruction also makes a difference in teaching disabled or remedial learners at all levels. In preparing future teachers, Brazee and Kristo (1986) create a whole language classroom to show how it works. At Arizona State University, LI.C248 is a whole language classroom of English Education Program, which is equipped with books around the room and big discussion tables in the middle; meanwhile, several courses of the program, such as Language Acquisition, Writing and Being, and Teaching Method, were conducted with whole language beliefs and practices in this classroom.

The conclusion, therefore, is that whole language theory seems to be universally true, and it can be practiced and applied to various levels of education, including secondary (in subject-structure), and higher and adult education. Not only can it be applied to first language learning, but also to second language learning. Its ultimate goal in education is to foster self-recognition, self-growth, and self-development of individuals to the fullest extent.

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